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Meaning and Change of Form: Eliot, Pound and Niedecker

This is a passage from a well-known poem:

> Twit twit twit
> Jug jug jug jug jug jug
> So rudely forc'd
> Tereu (Eliot 1952: 43)

Four lines, six words, one repeated three times, another, six, a three-word phrase unconnected to the other words and all the other words without any syntax. As the poet says: "I can connect / Nothing with nothing" (Eliot 1952: 46). Another contemporary passage:

> Hang it all, Robert Browning,
> there can be but one "Sordello."
> But Sordello and my Sordello?
> Lo Sordels si fo di Mantovana.
> So-shu churned in the sea.
> Seal sports in the spray-whitened circles of cliff-wash,
> Sleek head, daughter of Lir,
> eyes of Picasso
> Under black fur-hood, lithe daughter of Ocean;
> And the wave runs in the beach-groove:
> "Eleanor, ἐλέναυς and ἐλέπτλις!" (2/6)[1]

Eleven lines, three languages, five sentences or almost sentences, there is more syntax here, but perhaps also more disconnection. The individual lines or sentence units are tightly knit, held together in part by the alliteration and consonance of s sounds and what appears to be a discussion of two subjects: Sordello and the sea. This turns out not to be the case. The first four lines are about Sordello: Browning's Sordello, Pound's Sordello and the opening of the

[1] Ezra Pound, *The Cantos*, New York: New Directions, 1996. References are given in parentheses. The first number is that of the canto; the second, the page.

Provencal *vida* of Sordello (?1180–?1255). So-shu is a corrupt Japanese form of Shiba Shojo, a Chinese Han dynasty poet, Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju (179–117), who is criticized by the poet Li Po for creating foam instead of waves. Pound took all this from Ernest Fenollosa's notes and quotes him as saying,"Shojo stirred up decayed (enervated) waves. Open current flows about in bubbles, does not move in wave lengths." None of these items of Chinese literary criticism is clear from "So-shu churned in the sea," nor is it at all clear that this is literary criticism, and using a Japanese name for a Chinese poet is especially hermetic. So-shu's churning is metaphoric, the seal's sporting is real, but, despite the beauty of the description why there is a seal here is obscure. To say, as Terrell does, that the seal is one of the forms that Proteus takes in the Odyssey does not explain it. Lir is a Celtic sea-god that Pound has borrowed from the *Mabinogion*. Eleanor is Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122–1204) the wife of Louis VII of France and then of Henry II of England, the political complications of whose marriages contributed to the Hundred Years War, which is why Pound associates her with Helen of Troy. The two Greek epithets, ἑλέναυς and ἑλέπτλις, "ship destroying" and "city-destroying" are Aeschylus' puns on Helen's name in *Agamemnon* (689).[2] The construction of the line implies that the three names are what the sea says. The poet has compacted ten different subjects: Robert Browning's Sordello, Pound's Sordello, Sordello of Mantua, a mediocre Chinese poet, seal, Celtic sea god, Picasso, waves running up on the beach, Eleanor of Aquitaine and Helen of Troy. Browning's Sordello is related to the real Sordello (and Pound's), but otherwise there is no real connection between the subjects. There is no argument, no syntactical relation, the subjects are merely juxtaposed.

The breakdown or break up of the sentence, the fragment as a unit of form, the absence of syntax, and the freeing of individual words are things that we see again and again from about 1920 on in poetry and prose, and it is as if they were chosen to prevent any conventional narrative from establishing itself, to mark the flow of time and impose a new space of unity. Eliot's "These fragments I have shored against my ruin" appears almost as a declaration of method. This view of the nature of things as incomplete and unfinished is one that recognizes that the world and the individual are constantly changing and that this poses a problem of unity and continuity.

As Synge said to Yeats,"Is not style born out of the shock of new material?" (Yeats 1953: 323). The new material in this case was the new awareness of the complexity of mental events that involved a more vivid awareness of

[2] The glosses are based on Terrell 1980, 4–5.

consciousness – thinking, memory, fantasy, dreams – and the unconscious, and of the amorphousness of experience, such that this experience could not be expressed in the old forms. The awareness was accompanied by an inability to believe in religions and systematic philosophical interpretations of the world and the increasing acceptance of scientific explanations that, because they were partial – fragmentary – tentative, subject to revision and impersonal, did not answer questions about the value and purpose of human life. The old answers no longer answered the old questions. There was a problem of meaning, of the way people understood themselves and their world. Poetry – and all art – became an "irregular metaphysics."[3]

The new awareness of the complexity of mental events, the inability to believe, and the acceptance of technical, hypothetical and partial scientific explanations combined to change (and increase) the feeling of time passing. The increased sense of the uniqueness of every object made it harder to connect them and created feelings of separation, isolation and alienation – between individuals and between the individual and the surrounding world. The fragment is a metaphor. As these feelings are inter- and inner connected, it is probably incorrect to think of them as separate or distinct. "I know better than to claim any completeness for my picture," says Emerson. "I am a fragment and this is a fragment of me," he declares, significantly in his essay, "Experience" (Emerson n.d.: 83). "Only connect" is Forster's imperative in *Howards End* (1910) and two sentences later he writes "Live in fragments no longer" (Forster 1953: 174–75). To feel that you and your world are different every moment is unsettling, to say the least, and calls into question fixed and static explanations. Disconnection is what happens when we are unable to find a relation between things. Juxtaposition means putting things side by side without interpreting them *and* is a way of relating them to more other objects than is possible using ordinary syntax – this disconnection is the name of new connections, if you like. This new material demands new forms, new ideas of unity, wholes and relationships. Nietzsche saw the relationship between belief and form. He comments in *The Twilight of the Idols* (1889): "I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar." (Nietzsche 1968: 38).

The first Cubist paintings were the landscapes Braque painted at L'Estaque in the summer of 1908. After they were rejected by the Salon d'Automne (Matisse was a member of the jury), Kahnweiler included them in a one-

[3] Marcel Raymond, *De Baudelaire au surréalisme*, Paris: José Corti, 152, 11. Richard Blackmur's version of Raymond's phrase.

man show of Braque's work in Paris 9–28 November 1908. Louis Vauxcelle, reviewing the show (14 November 1908), states, "He despises form, reduces everything, sites, figures and houses to geometric complexes, to cubes." Matisse had drawn a sketch for him showing him how Braque's paintings were built up out of "petites cubes." Matisse later denied the story, but it is probably true (Golding 1968: 21; 66–67).[4] The first reference to *cubism* is by Charles Morice in an article attacking Braque (16 April 1909) for being "on the whole a victim–setting Cubism aside – of an admiration for Cézanne that is too exclusive or ill-considered." The term became common usage in the press from April 1911 (Golding 1968: 26; Richardson 1996: 450 n. 2). At the beginning, Braque and Picasso hated the word because they thought it did not describe what they were doing, but they ended up using it, although they never took it very seriously and Picasso once told an interviewer, "There is no such thing as cubism" (Richardson 1996: 105).

That the initial reaction to Braque's and Picasso's paintings was (and for many, is) one of rejection, that the early reviews were unfavourable and that *cubism* began as a pejorative term, shows the deep resistance to new art. Frank Stella's black paintings were first exhibited in a show called "Sixteen Americans" at the Museum of Modern Art in 1959. I read all the reviews. After a few cursory remarks on the other painters, every single reviewer spent the rest of the review attacking Stella's paintings. No one liked them. They are now recognised as a major event in the history of painting and hang in major museums around the world. We resist change and resist self-knowledge even more. Very simply, art brings new material to consciousness and most of us find this difficult to accommodate. There is nothing harder than self-knowledge.

Golding calls cubism "perhaps the most important and certainly the most complete and radical artistic revolution since the Renaissance." None of the changes of the past five hundred years "has so altered the principles, so shaken the foundations of Western painting as did Cubism" (Golding 1968: 15). "If social and historical factors can for a moment be forgotten, a portrait by Renoir will seem closer to a portrait by Raphael than it does to a Cubist portrait by Picasso" (Golding 1968: 15). Cubism is "a completely new pictorial language, a completely new way of looking at the outside word, a clearly-defined aesthetic" (Golding 1968: 17).

The new style was the creation of Braque and Picasso, who were joined in 1911 by Juan Gris. Braque and Picasso explored its possibilities for roughly

[4] On Matisse, cf. Richardson 1996: 101.

seven years (1908–1914) before moving onto other things, but the style has had a lasting impact. Richardson declares: "No question about it, Cubism engendered every major modernist movement" Richardson 1996: 106). Objects were reduced to stylized abstract shapes and calligraphic signs, to a sum of more or less disconnected parts. "In cubism," said Picasso, "you paint not what you *see*, but what you *know* is there" (Richardson 1961: 14). Cubism involved an abandonment of perspective, what Braque called "la fausse tradition." He said:

> The whole Renaissance tradition is repugnant to me. The hard-and-fast rules of perspective which it succeeded in imposing on art were a ghastly mistake, which it has taken four centuries to redress; Cézanne and after him Picasso and myself can take a lot of credit for this. Scientific perspective is nothing but eye-fooling illusionism; it is simply a trick – a bad trick – which makes it impossible for an artist to convey a full experience of space, since it forces the objects in a picture to disappear away from the beholder instead of bringing them within his reach, as painting should. Perspective is too mechanical to allow one to take full possession of things. It has its origins in a single viewpoint and never gets away from it.
>
> (Richardson 1961: 10)

Braque and Picasso wanted multiple viewpoints, a single image showing all sides or many sides of an object or person simultaneously. They dispensed with the vanishing point of traditional perspective so that infinite space is represented as finite and this brought the object closer to the viewer. They painted depth out of their pictures so that everything is near the surface within reach of the beholder. Mass, volume, weight and tactility were their values. Braque said he wanted "to make people want to touch what has been painted as well as look at it" (Richardson 1996: 105). "This was," he said, "a means of getting as close to the objects as painting allowed. Fragmentation allowed me to establish a spatial element as well a spatial movement" (Richardson 1961: 10). Braque generated what he called "une espace nouvelle" (Richardson 1996: 47).

Some scholars make a distinction between analytic (1908–1912) and synthetic cubism (1912–1914). The categories were not taken very seriously by Braque and Picasso, but were used by Kahnweiler and Gris. Kahnweiler in his *Der Weg zum Kubismus* (1920) describes Picasso as combining or synthesizing different views of an object into a single image (Golding 1968: 114) and he records Gris as saying in 1920, "My aim is to create new objects which cannot be compared to any object in reality. The difference between analytic and synthetic Cubism lies precisely in this" (qtd. in Golding 1968: 104). The change began with the first papier collé. It is worth noting that Braque

refers to his method as "fragmentation" and that the painting demonstrates a new relation to objects. Showing different perspectives in different points of view and all that you know about an object means including imagination and memory. Moreover, in view of Eliot's "These fragments I have shored against my ruin" (echoed by Pound in Canto 110/801), it is significant that the painters thought of themselves as taking the object apart and putting it back together again.

Braque was the first to introduce sign painter's lettering into his paintings in early 1910 and stencilled letters and numerals in the spring of 1911 (Golding 1968: 92). He explained them as follows: "Again with my usual desire to get as near to the reality of things as possible, I started to introduce letters into my pictures. These are forms which could not be deformed, because being two-dimensional, they existed outside three-dimensional space; their inclusion in a picture allowed one to distinguish between objects which were situated in space and those which belonged outside space." Braque also introduced *trompe l'oeil* nails with shadows into three of his 1910 still lifes (Richardson 1961: text, plate 13). As the paintings were becoming increasingly abstract this was a way of nailing them to reality. For all the radicalness of their views and their readiness to break with convention, both Braque and Picasso rejected abstraction and there was some polemic on the subject in the early days of cubism. Although the painters Gleizes and Metzger in their book, *Du Cubisme* (1912) declared: "The painting imitates nothing and [. . .] must justify its existence in itself [. . .] Yet we must admit that reminiscences of natural forms cannot be banished, at least not yet." The critic Hourcade called it un-French (1912): "our tradition calls for a subject and the originality of Cubism lies precisely in its rejection of the anecdote in order to rediscover the subject" and "it is absolutely false to say that all these painters are turning their backs on nature and want to produce only pure painting" (Golding 1968: 34).

Braque's family had a house painting business and before he became a painter Braque had spent three years as an apprentice learning the trade. He could do lettering, marbling, wood-graining and every kind of decorative effect and around 1912 he began to use all these techniques in his paintings to give them the illusion of reality, but as with the *trompe l'oeil* nail and its shadow, he wanted both the illusion and the real. The reality of Braque and Picasso is psychological, composed of objects and fantasy. "In cubism you paint not what you *see*, but what you *know*." Braque showed Picasso how to use these techniques and by summer 1912 they were both using wood-graining in their paintings. (Richardson 1996: 59–60, 246; Golding 1968: 104). After

1912 they began putting things other than paint in their paintings. Braque saw that despite the radicalness of the changes they had made, they still respected the basic medium: paint and in autumn 1912 he began adding sand to his paint (a habit he would continue to the end of his life) and he experimented with ashes, sawdust, metal filings, coffee grounds, tobacco and grit (Richardson 1961: 17). He also dispensed with the traditional varnishing of a finished painting. If he wanted a passage to shine, he would mix varnish with the paint which gave him the possibility of two different tone values for the same colours (as well as different colours).

Early in 1912 Picasso started using Ripolin, a shiny house paint, in his pictures, and he made the first collage, incorporating a piece of oil cloth printed to look like chair caning into a still life. Braque made the first papier collé at Sorgues early September 1912. He had bought in Avignon a roll of wallpaper that simulated wood-graining and pasted three pieces into his still life, *Fruit Dish and Glass*. "This discovery," Richardson (1961: 17–18) comments, "meant that Braque was able to cross the traditional barrier between sculpture and painting, because his picture became what he and Picasso called a *tableau-objet*, neither mirror-image of nature nor wall decoration, but an autonomous object with an identity of its own." Braque declared: "After having made the [first] papier collé, I felt a great shock, and it was an even greater shock for Picasso when I showed it to him" (Richardson 1996: 249). This is the resistance of the artist, who is after all like us in so many ways, to the new, which is why the genuinely new is so difficult and so rare. As Golding (1968: 180) emphasizes, "what is most remarkable is that in the period before the war, of the Cubist painters, only Picasso, Braque and Gris made any extensive use of *collage* and *papier collé*." The new was a frontier the others could not cross.

According to Richardson (1996), until Braque showed him *Fruit Dish and Glass*, Picasso had not realized the consequences of his piece of oilcloth with the chair canning:

> An object could now be presented by some foreign element that was an equivalent, as opposed to an image, of itself. A piece of newspaper, for instance, could stand for a newspaper; it could also signify anything else the artist wanted it to signify. Drawing could then function simultaneously and independently to indicate volume and integrate the real element (the piece of newspaper or wallpaper) into the composition. Furthermore, by enabling color to function independently of form, papier collé made it easier for Picasso and Braque to introduce positive color into a cubist composition. And since scissors make for a sharper edge than a paintbrush, they could now achieve much sharper contrasts of color, tone and texture.

Forty years later when Picasso saw *Fruit Dish and Glass* in Douglas Cooper's collection he exclaimed: "*Le Salaud.* He waited until my back was turned. (Cooper's chateau was not far from Avignon.) I'll stop at that wallpaper shop and see what they have left." The story shows not only the rivalry of the two painters, but also that the shock and force of the new was still present.

Braque said papier collé gave him "a kind of certainty" and enabled him to "ground" things. He had also talked of keeping "certitudes," certainties, a sufficient number of realistic elements in his paintings so that viewers would know where they were. By early 1913, Picasso had put a postage stamp in a painting and was using strips of cloth, pieces of paper and occasionally bits of tin or zinc foil. Gris glued a small fragment of mirror to his *Le Lavabo* (1913) (Richardson 1996: 249; Golding 1968: 104). The idea of collage (including papier collé) is that of incorporating already existing objects with their own purposes into a work of art such that they both represent themselves and function as metaphors. They stand for the real, emphasizing the work's material existence at the same time manifesting its status as a work of imagination.

The poets began around this time to put materials of different kinds into their poems. They wrote about objects in new ways and wanted to get closer to them. Events and things were seen in a different perspective related to the rejection of grammar. There is no doubt in my mind that "The Man with the Blue Guitar" (1937), despite Stevens's denials, refers to Picasso's "The Old Guitar Player" and that he is thinking in the poem about the nature of representation in Picasso's paintings and the unity of the person. Section XV begins: "Is this picture of Picasso's, this hoard /of destructions," "a picture of ourselves . . .?" Stevens has borrowed Picasso's statement that a picture is a "hoard of destructions" (Rehder 1988: 150–51; 311–12, n. 10). Quotation is the technique that allows poets to come closest to the painters' collages and *The Waste Land* is the work that establishes it in poetry. Facts of different kinds (historical, scientific), depending on how they are used, and the use of foreign languages can also be said to be analogous to the various foreign elements (newspaper, wallpaper, sand) that the painters used.

Eliot quotes from a deliberately heterogeneous variety of texts – poems, plays, scripture, autobiography, opera and popular songs. He quotes in six foreign languages: Latin, Greek, Italian, German, French and Sanskrit as well as English. He quotes Augustine and the Buddha in translation. Moreover, he sometimes quotes without marking it as a quotation and often paraphrases, echoes or rearranges his source. He includes many onomatopoetic words. He also deliberately changes the quality of his own language in passages that are

sometimes almost pastiche or imitation, and which can be seen as comparable to the painted wood-graining of Braque and Picasso. Eliot learned about the imitation of other styles from the instalments of *Ulysses* published in *The Little Review* (March 1918 to December 1920) (Ellmann 1959: 456). Quotation allowed the poets to refer to different past times, which the painters could not do so easily.

Pound in *The Cantos* like Eliot quotes from a great variety of sources in many languages, but is more radical than Eliot in trimming his citations, sometimes to a single word, and like Eliot he includes a variety of voices and frequently changes the tone and quality of his own language. He goes further than Eliot in that he includes more visual elements: there are framed signs (34/171, 71/418), and Canto 22/103 shows a framed sign with a black dot as a nail and the twine holding it up which reminds us of the *trompe l'oeil* nails of Braque and Picasso and their inclusion of signs and fragments of newspaper. Canto 75 gives the score of a piece of music. He arranges letters as notes on a scale in 82/545 and imitates Renaissance musical notation in 91/630. There are Egyptian hieroglyphics (93/643, 646, 647, 651), the crudely written name of the Persian poet Firdausi in Persian script (77/494), hieroglyphic drawings (97/700, 701, 702) and he puts a Maltese cross in the margin of Canto 42/210 to imitate the sealing of a document. Pound, unlike Eliot, uses letters and different kinds of documents. The most important visual element is the Chinese characters that begin in Canto 34/171 and become increasingly numerous. Pound asked for more characters to be added to the later cantos, but New Directions and Faber ignored his requests because they would be too expensive.

The Cantos is a poem without a plan, or rather, Pound keeps changing his mind about the plan. He writes to Felix Schelling (8 July 1922): "Perhaps as the poem goes on I shall be able to make various things clearer [. . .] I hope, heaven help me, to bring them ["the colours or elements" he wants for the poem] into some sort of design or architecture later" (Pound 1971: 180). This was before the publication of the first set of thirty in 1930, even so the idea of the form coming later is very strange. However, in February 1939, after the publication of 51 cantos, roughly half the poem, he writes to Herbert Creekmore: "As to the *form* of *The Cantos*: All I can say or pray is: *wait* till its there. I mean wait till I get 'em written and then if it don't show, I will start exegesis. I haven't an Aquinas-map, Aquinas NOT valid now" (Pound 1971: 323). It is as if not being able to see the world as an interpreted whole, he could not decide on the order of his poem.

The Cantos are a search for form. The poem's order is improvised. Pound made it up as he went along; however, at the end, he declares: "And I am not a demigod, / I cannot make it cohere" (106/816). He is like Eliot at the end of *The Waste Land* surrounded by ruins. He could not find the form of his own life. An "Aquinas-map" was his aspiration – a systematic, complete and logically-connected interpretation of the nature of things, but there is neither a religion nor a philosophy in which Pound could believe that could provide such an interpretation. Instead there are intermittently recurring would-be redeeming moments of illumination that are between moments of vivid perception and religious experience. The *Commedia* remained an ideal, but he could not achieve Dante's integration and so was left with disconnected bits and pieces.

The Cantos are the autobiography of a poet who had a profound resistance to self-analysis. This is one reason for the radical fragmentation and disconnection of the poem. That it is an autobiography is one reason why Pound did not settle on any particular plan. He needed to keep the poem open to whatever happened to him next. Although Pound constantly but irregularly uses the first person and describes episodes from his own life, most of the poem is composed of other peoples' stories told by a story teller with a deep resistance to narrative who employs a variety of techniques to make his stories discontinuous and incomplete. He keeps changing stories so as to avoid self-revelation.

Pound justifies this radical disconnectedness in an article on obscurity in the *New Review* (August-September-October 1931): "Certain kinds of depth are obtainable only I suppose with a concision that produces an apparent obscurity. The test is probably: precision. If the phrase is exact the obscurity grows steadily less with increased attention of the reader" (Stock 1970: 376). It is significant that Pound says "the phrase" instead of "the sentence." To commit himself to a complete sentence or sustained narrative is too much like self-revelation. He shortens his phrases for greater immediacy and to hide himself – often, I believe, from himself. He focuses on objects and their qualities.

In one of the three cantos that he wrote and published in 1912 before starting on the present cantos, Pound addresses Robert Browning: "say I take your whole bag of tricks and say the thing's an art form:"

> Your Sordello, and that the modern world
> Needs such a rag-bag to stuff all its thought in,
> Say that I dump my catch, shiny and silvery
> As fresh sardines slapping and slipping on the margin of cobbles?

Pound suggests these lines in a preface to *Selected Cantos* (1966) as perhaps the best introduction to the poem, clearly equating a particular view of the world with a particular literary form (qtd. in Alexander 1979: 135). The idea is that the world is not an ordered or coherent whole, that its objects are thrown together randomly, willy-nilly, stuffed like rags in a bag or dumped like fish on the pavement, that the only form that accurately represents it is that of the rag-bag, one that contains a variety of disconnected, fragmentary, disparate materials. This is the antithesis of "an Aquinas-map." To which may be compared Aaron Copland's statement that "Sibelius does not live in a 20th-century world. He is a hangover from the 1890's [. . .] his ruminations on life and man are [. . .] conclusions arrived at from old-fashioned premises, premises that no longer hold water in our time" – another call for new forms appropriate to the new circumstances (Copland 1968: 39).

Valéry, considering what he terms "La Crise de l'esprit," asks: "Et de quoi était fait ce désordre de notre Europe mentale? – De la libre coexistence dans tous les esprits cultivés des idées les plus dissembles, des principes de vie et de connaissance les plus opposés. C'est là ce qui caractérise une époque *moderne*." Writing in 1919, between the publication of Pound's draft canto with the metaphor of the rag-bag (1912) and *The Waste Land* (1922), he sees the culture as defined by being composed of disparate, unrelated elements – fragments. He shares Pound's idea of the rag-bag. Not only the culture, but its individual works (regardless of form) are composed of fragments:

> Dans tel livre de cette époque – et non des plus mediocre – on trouve, sans aucun effort: – une influence des ballets russes, un peu du style sombre de Pascal, – beaucoup d'impressions du type Goncourt, – quelque chose de Nietzsche, – quelque chose de Rimbaud, – certains effets dus à la frequentation de peintres, et parfois le ton des publications scientifiques, –le tout perfumé d'un je ne sais pas britainnique difficile à doser.

And he adds that within the components of this mixture one will find many other elements (Valéry 1957: 991–92).

Cubism is a major change in art, but it is part of another major change, probably equally important, if not more so: abstraction. Cubism involved abstraction and many of the subjects of Braque's and Picasso's 1910–11 paintings are very difficult to make out, even when the titles provide a clue, but, as the titles demonstrate, neither painter wanted to forsake the real world. Kandinsky did. He painted what he considered the first completely "non-objective oil painting" (location now unknown) in 1911: "*Bild mit Kreis*" (Roethel and

Benjamin 1982: 38, 391). Thereafter, his best works are abstractions. What is the subject of an abstract painting? One answer is: paint – colour, texture, form. Another answer is: amorphous feelings. Abstractions may be said to be an attempt to get to the origins of things, to primitive, unorganized feelings. Kandinsky's own answer is informative. He declares in *Uber das Geistige in der Kunst* (Concerning the Spiritual [or Intellectual] in Art, 1911):

> When religion, science and morality are shaken, the last two by the strong hand of Nietzsche, and when outer supports threaten to fall, man turns his gaze from externals in on himself. Literature, music and art are the first and most sensitive spheres in which this spiritual [intellectual] revolution makes itself felt.
>
> (Kandinsky 1977: 14)

The shaking was also done by Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau and others. For Kandinsky, as for Pound, the old world-view is no longer valid and a new one must be created. Abstract paintings represent the inward gaze. The painter paints the inner not the outer world. The work of the Dada group that met in the Café Voltaire in Zurich in 1916, and André Breton – the ideas set forth in the two surrealist manifestos (1924, 1930) and *Qu'est-ce que le surrealisme?* (1934) – and the work of the artists who rallied to his ideas, were also efforts to get closer to the stream of consciousness and the unconscious by rejecting the old conventions.

During this same period (1907–1912), Schoenberg composed a series of works – the *Three Piano Pieces*, Op. 11 (1909), *Das Buch der hangenden Garten*, Op. 15 (1908–1909), *Five Orchestral Pieces*, Op. 16 (1909), *Erwartung*, Op. 17 (1909) and *Pierrot lunaire*, Op. 21 (1912) – that negated all the established principles of musical structure of the last three hundred years, and that, after an eight-year period of silence (1915–1923), enabled him to invent an entirely new musical language. Dissonance is not resolved, the form is obscure and not meant to be grasped, and there is no harmony in the old sense – these are all statements with implied meaning about the nature of things.

The work of Lorine Niedecker (1903–1970), a major American poet who has been largely overlooked, is a particularly interesting example of change of form, although she is trying to put things back together. Known for her very short lyrics, she writes to Cid Corman (14 February 1968):

> I've been going thru a bad time – in one moment (winter) I'd have thrown over all my life (if one can) years of clean-cut, concise short poem manner for "something else" (still don't know what to call it). (Niedecker 1986: 153)

The letter is dated nine months before the publication of *North Central* (1968), her third book that included her first five long poems: "Lake Superior," "Traces of Living Things," "My Life by Water," "Paean to Place" and "Wintergreen Ridge" – and after the composition of the first two poems. Even then she was still in a state of indecision. That Niedecker thinks of "My Life by Water" as a longish poem gives an idea of her sense of scale. Consisting of nine three-line stanzas with very short lines (46 words), it is only just over a page in length. She wrote three more long poems: "Thomas Jefferson," "His Carpets Flowered" (on William Morris) and "Darwin." Four of the first five are clearly autobiographical. The last three are biographical, about other people, but, in one sense, the form is the same, that of the individual human life, which is conceived as a series of unique moments. This is the form of Wordsworth's autobiographical poem and a definition of what it means to be an individual.

There are a few glimpses in Niedecker's surviving letters of her thinking about this major change of form. She tells Corman (18 February 1962) that he and another poet friend:

> Have thrown off the shackles of the sentence and the wide melody. For me the sentence lies in wait – all those prepositions and connectives – like an early spring flood. A good thing my follow-up feeling has always been condense, condense.
>
> (Niedecker 1986: 33)

The sentence is "the wide melody," a spreading, overwhelming flood pushing out the boundaries of the poem such that she must condense to impose limits, boundaries, and make it shorter and clean-cut. For Niedecker the sentence is a long form. Stanzas are not enough. All a poem's words must be within the magnetic field of the sentence's grammar.

Seven months before the letter to Corman about "something else," she is thinking about changing, but searching without finding. She writes to her neighbour, Gail Roub (20 June 1967):

> Much taken up with how to define a way of writing poetry which is not Imagist nor Objectivist fundamentally nor Surrealism alone – [. . .] I loosely called it "re-flections" or as I think it over now, reflective, maybe. The basis is direct and clear – what has been seen or heard, etc. [. . .] – but something gets in, overlays all that to make a state of consciousness.

Imagist is Pound, Objectivist is Zukofsky. Zukofsky was a former lover and one of her closest friends, Pound is the poet he admired the most. Her concern at the start is to separate herself from what others are doing. She needs to be

independent and has an instinct about what direction to take. Niedecker's early poems show her experimenting with the ideas and techniques of surrealism. She uses the three terms as a kind of shorthand to denote what she does not want. She has her own purposes and is determined to go her own way.

The tendency of all so-called imagist poetry, Pound's imperatives and Zukofsky's theories, is to a minimal presentation of a thing seen. It is a way of avoiding the sentimental, a discipline for managing emotion. Niedecker wants the object, but she also needs the context of its perception and what the mind does to make it meaningful. She begins with "the basis," "direct and clear," but this is finally not enough – she needs the something that "gets in," that "overlays all," the perceiver's "state of consciousness," mood, associations, reflections. Unlike Pound and Zukofsky, who want to remove the perceiver and focus on the object, Niedecker wants to include the state of mind of the act of perception, but to do so without long descriptions of thinking or feeling. She does this by building sequences, as a series of images necessarily brings us closer to the process of seeing and forces us to consider the relationships between objects and their context. "I used to feel," she tells Roub in 1967, "that I was goofing off unless I held only to the hard, clear image, the thing you could put your hand on but now I dare do this reflection" (Roub 1996: 86). Meaning demands longer, more comprehensive structures, like sentences. Although she is part of the tradition of the long poem of fragments inaugurated by *The Waste Land*, Niedecker wants to integrate her fragments. Like the Cubist painters, she has no interest in "metaphysical speculations." Unlike Pound and Eliot, she can believe in the world as it is; scientific explanations however incomplete are enough. She is perhaps unique among major poets in being able to accept without difficulty a materialistic interpretation of the world.

"Thomas Jefferson" and "Darwin" are poems that try to establish how their protagonists found meaning in their lives. With Jefferson she is interested in his sense of beauty, his abilities as an architect, his curiosity about the world and his relations with other people. His politics are taken for granted. The work is composed of nineteen short poems, usually of two or three stanzas and very short lines. Three sections (II, III and XIX) are of short three-line stanzas and four (VIII, X, XII, XIV) are of two-line stanzas, the other twelve each have their own form. This variety of forms and multiplicity of sections indicates, I believe, a recognition of the uniqueness of each moment of experience and the problematic nature of any statement about unity of character. The details of Jefferson's life – and small details are of the greatest importance in these small poems – are drawn, for the most part, from Jefferson's letters. She abridges,

condenses and paraphrases Jefferson in the seven poems in the first person. The rest are in the third person (VI can be seen as combining the two). The alternation between *I* and *he* means that we see Jefferson both from the inside and the outside. (Multiple perspectives are a characteristic of Braque's and Picasso's cubist paintings, and their 1911 portraits show the subject as a sum of many parts).

The result is a series of more or less self-contained short poems that are neither only images nor anecdotes and not exactly moments. Four and sixteen, for example, are slightly out of time, or, rather, cannot be assigned to any specific time. Each poem is a new beginning – this is a major advantage of a longer poem in sections – a new attempt to show Jefferson as a person, not trying to summarize him as a whole, but considering his many-sided character one or two facets at a time. Consequently, the sum is greater than the parts and presents us with the form of a human life that although all of a piece, is, within limits, open to change, heterogeneous, contradictory, amorphous, and in a state of tension and process. The form of "Thomas Jefferson" is essentially that of Wordsworth's autobiographical poem, except that Wordsworth feels the need to write connecting passages where Niedecker condenses and deliberately leaves spaces between the units and avoids trying to impose a single form. Wordsworth in all the major MSS of his long poem also leaves spaces between verse paragraphs. Wordsworth's need to analyze in order to understand his feelings causes him to describe at length and mark the nuances. Niedecker wants to denote them by a single word, phrase, image or metaphor. She works to a different rigour. Too many words get in the way.

The fourth poem is a good example:

Latin and Greek
my tools
to understand
humanity

I rode horse
away from a monarch
to an enchanting
philosophy (Niedecker 2002: 276)

Niedecker maintains a nice balance between a minimal definiteness: *Latin*, *Greek*, *tools* and *monarch* and the abstract generality of *understand*, *humanity* and *enchanting philosophy*. The first stanza is a statement, the second, an image. The stanzas end with rhyming abstractions. They are not connected and anyone

who knows anything about Jefferson knows that his philosophy was that of the Declaration of Independence's "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," the Bill of Rights and a view of rural life that owed something perhaps to the classics, but probably more to Rousseau. Jefferson's heroes were Bacon, Locke and Newton, not Plato and Aristotle. He studied Latin and Greek like most educated men of his time, but he thought "Their acquisition should be the occupation of our early years only" and they would certainly not be useful "to all men" (Jefferson 1984: 1423–24). Niedecker constructs her own Jefferson.

Latin and Greek as "tools" remind us of Jefferson's practical side and his skills as a handyman and inventor. Their specificity is set against the abstract generality of "understanding humanity" in the same way that "I rode horse / away from a monarch" is set against "an enchanting philosophy." "I rode horse" is old fashioned. Niedecker makes "away from" into a destination. "Enchanting" suggests the delight, beauty and temptation of philosophy, almost as if Jefferson were under a spell. She converts mental events into physical metaphors (*tools, rode, horse*) and transfers the action to an abstract never-never land.

Niedecker does not worry about connection. The individual parts of "Thomas Jefferson" (and most of her longer poems) are only loosely connected. The sequence matters, but it is a personal rather than a necessary order, psychological, if one likes, rather than any other kind of logic. "Thomas Jefferson" is vaguely chronological, if one overlooks the composite nature of most of the parts, "Darwin" is emphatically not. Eliot in *The Waste Land* juxtaposes different kinds of material, different languages, different textures, Niedecker rarely does this. She puts things side by side not for simple contrasts or to break the narrative in any obvious way, but because she thinks the relation of the parts is self-evident. This is her economy, her Occam's razor. The sections are loosely connected and composite because she believes in the irregularity and angularity of life, and the fluidity of consciousness. She has found her new forms in the stream of consciousness. She writes longer poems in order to get more ideas into them, more meaning. "Thomas Jefferson" is not like Wordsworth's autobiographical poem composed of moments that are located in space and time. Many of them refer to or imply several different times and places. When this happens in Wordsworth or Proust, the events are connected by memory. There is no suggestion of this in Niedecker. The individual units are collages. The citations can be compared to the newspaper and wallpaper pasted into their paintings by Braque and Picasso. Her units assemble and compact different moments. They resemble Braque's new spaces. She has Braque's desire to touch, to put her hand on things. Like Wordsworth, she writes longer poems in order

to include many moments and reflect on their relationship, and on the form of a human life as a whole. Unlike Wordsworth, in her autobiographical poems she is not worried about wholeness and does not feel divided, and in the poems about others, that all the events belong to one person is enough to unify them.

Niedecker's "Darwin" differs from "Thomas Jefferson" in that it confronts Darwin's major ideas and in that she uses the same stanza form throughout: three stair-step lines, the second inset from the first, the third, from the second and a fourth line indented half-way between the first and second. This fourth line usually establishes some kind of conclusion and the form creates a definite rhythm for the poem as a whole. Most of the specific events mentioned occurred on Darwin's around the world voyage on *H.M.S. Beagle* (1831–1836).

This is the fifth and final section:

I remember, he said
those tropical nights at sea –
we sat and talked
on the booms

Tierra del Fuego's
shining glaciers translucent
blue clear down
(almost) to the indigo sea

(By the way Carlyle
thought it was most ridiculous
anyone should care
whether a glacier

moves a little quicker
or a little slower
or moved at all)
Darwin

sailed out
of Good Success Bay
to carcass –
conclusions –

the universe
not built by brute force
but designed by laws
The details left

to the workings of chance
'Let each man hope
and believe
what he can' (Niedecker 2002: 298–99)

Niedecker has spliced together part of Darwin's letter of 1861 or 1862 to P. G. King, who had been a midshipman on the *Beagle*: "the remembrance of old days when we used to sit and talk on the booms will always to the day of my death, make me glad to hear of your happiness and prosperity" and King's comments to Francis Darwin on the pleasure his father used to take "pointing out to me as a youngster the delights of tropical nights" (Darwin F. 1958: 134).

The language describing the Tierra del Fuego glaciers appears to be Niedecker's own elaboration of Darwin's. He writes in *The Voyage of the Beagle*:

> In many parts, magnificent glaciers extend from the mountain side to the water's edge. It is scarcely possible to imagine anything more beautiful than the beryl-like blue of these glaciers, and especially as contrasted with the dead white of the upper expanse of snow. (Darwin 1962: 225)

Beryl, according to the Shorter Oxford, is "a transparent precious stone of a pale-green colour passing into light blue" and as a colour, "pale sea-green" (1831). Darwin marks the contrast between the beryl-blue glaciers and "the dead white" snow, Niedecker, between the "translucent / blue" glaciers and "the indigo sea." *Shining* goes with *translucent* and both are reinforced by *clear*. The parenthetical *almost* is a nice bit of imaginary accuracy and causes the description to seem more authentic.

The Carlyle anecdote is borrowed from Darwin's autobiography. He met him several times and writes: "His mind seemed to me a very narrow one; even if all branches of science, which he despised, are excluded." "He thought it a most ridiculous thing that any one should care whether a glacier moved a little quicker or a little slower, or moved at all." Niedecker omits Darwin's next sentence: "As far as I could judge I never met a man with a mind so ill adapted for scientific research" (Darwin C. 1958: 112–14). Carlyle stands for the resistance to a scientific view of the world, where by implication the smallest details are significant, the "(almost)" blue and the glacier's "little quicker / or a little slower." Darwin was a master of detail, rigorous and obsessive. "I am a complete millionaire in odd and curious facts," he told Hooker in 1864 (Darwin F. 1958: 281). His theories were based on his meticulous collection of

materials and experiments. They are his "carcass-conclusions." Niedecker tells the story of the African cat carcass at the end of section IV. She has Darwin writing to Lyell. Actually the letter was to his second cousin, W. D. Fox (25 January 1841): "Don't forget if your half-bred African cat should die, that I would be very much obliged for its carcase sent up in a little hamper for skeleton" (Darwin 1986: 2. 279). She condenses and smoothes the sentence. Good Success Bay is at the tip of Tierra del Fuego. The *Beagle* anchored there on 17 December 1832.

Niedecker ends the poem with a comprehensive statement on the nature of the universe that she takes from Darwin's letter to Asa Gray (22 May 1860). Darwin says that "with respect to the theological view of the question:"

> This is always painful to me. I am bewildered. I had no intention to write atheistically. But I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express purpose of feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed.

The standard argument for design had been put forward in his *Natural Theology* (1802) by Paley. His most famous example was that the human eye was too complicated to be the result of chance. Paley's works were set for Darwin's final examinations at Cambridge.

Darwin goes on to say:

> On the other hand, I cannot anyhow be contented to view this wonderful universe, and especially the nature of man, and to conclude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion *at all* satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton. Let each man hope and believe what he can. (Darwin F. 1958: 249)

Niedecker has simplified and condensed Darwin's statements, paring it down to its essentials, leaving out his hesitations and doubts, and his further statement that his views are "not at all necessarily atheistical" because it can be argued that the laws may have been designed this way by "an omniscient Creator." Niedecker gives us a straight forward materialistic view. Her reformulation of Darwin is deft and subtle. The universe – this goes way beyond *The Origin*

of Species – is an ordered unity. *Brute force* is strange as an alternative to the six days of creation in Genesis. This would appear to be random force, force without laws. "[D]esigned by laws / the details left / to the workings of chance" affirms the order without saying anything about the origin of the laws. *Workings* suggests deliberation and purpose, "workings of chance" builds a certain amount of unpredictability into the inevitability of *laws*, structure without determinism, with a contingent freedom and variety. At the end of the poem, belief is free and Niedecker sees clearly its relation to hope. She (and Darwin) leave it up to the individual. By implication the ready made answers of religion and philosophy are set aside. Each person does the best they can in responding to the difficulties of understanding the world.

Between 1908 and 1922 there are major developments in art, music and literature that radically change the nature of representation. The fragment becomes a form. Narratives are discontinuous or held together in new ways. There is a new sense of what constitutes a whole. These events are a result of a change in the way of apprehending the world. The First World War was not, as is sometimes said, a primary cause, rather a symptom. If we think about causes, the most obvious major change before this is the introduction of the idea of quanta into physics. "In writing the history of the intellectual world," Louis de Broglie declares, "there have been few upheavals comparable to this" (Broglie 1953: 24). Braque, Picasso and Gris "were intent on interpreting the world in new pictorial terms," which were, as Golding puts it, "anti-naturalistic but representational." "Their vision," he states, "was untouched by any literary or romantic considerations, and they ignored all forms of metaphysical speculation" (Golding 1968: 177). Every view of the world, however, makes assumptions about the nature of things, and although these assumptions are often half-conscious or unconscious, they enter into the determination of the form of a work of art.

The painting for Braque is an independent, untranslatable object. "To explain away the mystery of a great painting – if such a feat were possible – would do irreparable harm, for whenever you explain or define something you substitute the explanation or definition for the real thing." "You see," he told Richardson, "I have made a great discovery: I no longer believe in anything. Objects do not exist for me except in so far as a *rapport* exists between them and myself. In other words, it is not objects that matter to me, but what is between them: it is this 'in-between' that is the real subject of my pictures" (Richardson 1961: 23–24). This is another way of saying that he paints his experience, his consciousness. He looks for "poetry" in art, a quality which he says cannot be

defined. He finds in the process of painting and the completed object a "state of harmony between things and oneself" – a state of mind he himself creates, personal and which cannot be shared. For Braque, the painting explains nothing.

The thirteen years before Braque painted the first Cubist picture saw the beginning of a revolution in physics, the most important change in the way scientists viewed the physical world since Newton's *Principia* (1687). The equation that Planck wrote for black-body radiation in 1900 marks the end of classical physics as established by Newton. This is the radiation emitted by a body, regardless of its composition, that absorbs all the radiation it receives (and reflects none). Planck had wanted to show that the second law of thermodynamics that entropy increases is an absolute, instead he had to use Boltzmann's statistical interpretation of that law: that it is extremely probable, but not absolutely certain. Then, in order to make his formula fit the experimental data, he also had to assume, contrary to the well-established wave theory of light, that energy was discontinuous and moved in small, discrete, intermittent bursts that he named "quanta." At first Planck did not understand the full consequences of his theory and later spent many years trying to undo its revolutionary character. The person who saw its consequences most clearly was Einstein, then a clerk in the Swiss Patent Office in Bern: "All my attempts [. . .] to adapt the theoretical foundation of physics to this knowledge failed completely. It was as if the ground had been pulled out from under one, with no firm foundation to be seen anywhere, upon which one could have built" (Pais 1986: 130).[5]

Planck's equation is one of a series of discoveries concerning different types of radiation (x-rays, 1895; radioactivity, 1896; alpha and beta rays, 1899; gamma rays, 1900; the photoelectric effect, 1905) that showed the instabilities of matter and demanded a re-examination of its basic structure. The electron was found in 1887/1899, the atomic nucleus, in 1911. These discoveries showed that matter is composed of very small atomic and subatomic particles, not exactly fragments, as the particles were related by their energies, but the physicists took the world apart in a way analogous to the Cubist painters. The direction of their research, like those of the artists, was inward. Quantum physics suggests that things are discontinuous. At this same time, Freud was beginning his study of invisible forces. *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1899. Dada and surrealism are clearly a response to Freud's work.

Pais states: "The era of the old quantum mechanics [1900–1925] [. . .] constitutes the most protracted revolutionary period in modern science." Six

[5] On Planck, see Cline 1987: 31–63; Broglie 1953: 99–121; Pais 1986: 129–134.

theoretical papers appeared that were revolutionary in the sense "that they contain at least one theoretical step which (whether the [...] authors knew it then or not) could not be justified at the time of writing" and where it "was not yet clear which parts" of the older physics could be reintegrated in a new frame:

> Planck's [...] discovery of the quantum theory (1900); Einstein's on the light quantum (1905); Bohr's on the hydrogen atom (1913); Bose's on what came to be called quantum statistics (1924); Heisenberg's on what came to be known as matrix mechanics (1925); and Schroedinger's on wave mechanics (1926).

"The introduction of probability in the sense of quantum mechanics – that is, probability as an inherent feature of fundamental physical law – may well be," Pais writes (in 1986), "the most drastic scientific change yet effected in the 20th century." For him, this revolution comes to an end in 1927 with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and Bohr's idea of complementarity (Pais 1986: 250–51). The interest in surrealism tends to fade after this time and the period of radical change in literary form comes to an end. *The Sound and the Fury* is published in 1929, *As I Lay Dying*, 1930 and *Absalom, Absalom*, 1936, although it can be argued that everything is already there in *Ulysses* (1922) and *Manhattan Transfer* (1925). Heisenberg shows that the presence of the observer limits what can be known (*The Sound and the Fury* presents an interesting analogue), and Bohr believes that it is necessary to accept the wave/quantum duality, to live with two irreconcilable ways of looking at the same thing. Both ideas can be used metaphorically to indicate some of the problems that authors have with first person narrators after Proust.

Bertrand Russell, who was very aware of the revolution in physics, sees a change in the practice of philosophy at this time. The new philosophy which he calls "the philosophy of logical analysis" or "modern analytical empiricism" (now usually shortened to "analytic philosophy") "differs from that of Locke, Berkeley and Hume by its incorporation of mathematics and development of a powerful logical technique" such that some of its answers have "the quality of science." "It has the advantage as compared with the philosophies of the system-builders, of being able to tackle its problems one at a time, instead of having to invent at one stroke a block theory of the whole universe. Its methods in this respect resemble those of science" (Russell 1945: 834). Problems "one at a time" means that it works on fragments. As with the new painting, new music and new physics, there is a need to re-establish the fundamentals of the subject. This re-thinking can be approximately dated from Russell's *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903) which sets out to prove that

"pure mathematics deals exclusively with concepts definable in terms of a very small number of fundamental logical concepts, and that all its propositions are deductible from a very small number of fundamental logical principles" (Russell 1903: xv). Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica* that tries to elaborate a formal demonstration of these ideas (the title indicates its ambition) is published in 1910. Russell attempts to put mathematics (and philosophy) on a new basis, solider and more rigorous, and his logic is, in a sense, a new language. He summarizes the consequences of the new physics for philosophy in *The Analysis of Matter* (1927).

Form has a meaning, even if we cannot say very much about it. *The Waste Land* is a poem of fragments, deliberately disconnected and juxtaposed. What Eliot says about the state of European culture, the failure of communication and relationships, the isolation of the individual, and the meaningless of the individual life is unambiguous and helps us to understand the form. The structure and techniques imply certain ideas and what the words say guides the reader in interpreting the meaning of the form, although there is only a very limited amount in most cases that can be said. The structure, techniques and disorder of *The Cantos* and Pound's inability to finish tell a similar story. When Schoenberg was hoping Oscar Levant would give the first performance of his Piano Concerto, Op. 42 (1942), he jotted down "a few explanatory phrases" to help Levant approach the work's four movements:

> Life was easy
> Suddenly hatred broke out
> A grave situation was created
> But life goes on

I suspect that few if any listeners would be able to give such a succinct account unprompted. MacDonald, who tells the story, calls it "a fair summary of the Concerto's emotional progression" and goes on to say that anyone who explores Schoenberg's output in depth "becomes aware that a very large proportion of his works, from all periods of his career, seem to embody different forms of the same experiential pattern" (MacDonald 1976: 217–18). The example suggests the limited amount of interpretation that is possible, as well as the idea that all of an artist's works have the unity of his experience. What else does an artist have except his experience?

Schoenberg writes: "There is only one greatest goal toward which the artist strives: to express himself." He did not invent a new music for the sake of change. "I personally hate to be called a revolutionary, which I am not. What

I did was neither revolutionary nor anarchy." "I am a conservative who was forced to become a radical" (Machlis 1982: 137; 243). Pais (1986: 131–32) writes that he is struck "by the number of middle-aged men" who played major roles in the quantum revolution. "They were not young Turks out to set the world on fire, but rather seasoned pros, systematically extending and refining work done by their experimentalist predecessors. Revolution was not on their minds, it was alien to them." Picasso told Zervos: "When we invented cubism, we had no intention whatever of inventing cubism. We simply wanted to express what was in us" (Richardson 1996: 105). Braque said to Richardson: "Cubism, or rather my cubism, was a means I created for my own use, whose primary aim was to put painting within the range of my own gifts" (Richardson 1961: 9). Nonetheless, like everybody else, the artist lives his life in the world and as Kandinsky points out, when an intellectual revolution takes place, music, art and literature are "the first and most sensitive spheres" in which it "makes itself felt" (Kandinsky 1977: 14). "Art," says Schoenberg (1910), "is the cry of distress uttered by those who experience at first hand the fate of mankind [. . .] The world revolves within – inside them: what bursts out is merely the echo – the work of art!" (Reich 1971: 56–57). And he has Aaron sing in Act 2 of *Moses und Aaron*: "You cannot expect the Form before the Idea, / For they will come into being together." (MacDonald 1976: 58, 63). Let each man hope – make – and believe what he can.

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